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ALBANIA AND THE ALBANIANS*

By H. CHARLES WOODS

Although her people have obviously not been able to play any direct part in the war, the geographical and political importance of Albania is such that the history of and the conditions prevailing in that country are worthy of serious consideration today. Geographically this importance is due to the fact that Albania occupies a position which makes it the natural means of entry into and exit from a large part of the western half of the Balkan Peninsula. For this reason the northern part of the country, together with the ports of San Giovanni di Medua and Durazzo, are coveted by the Serbs, who desire, by securing possession of them, to obtain free access to the sea. Equally well, by its situation on the lower Adriatic, Albania practically commands the Straits of Otranto, and the government in control there would control the Adriatic to which they lead. It is this which makes Italy particularly interested in the future of Europe's latest principality and specially in that of its southern port, Valona, for that Power cannot afford to be menaced by the establishment there of a régime hostile to her natural development, her safety, and her very existence.

Closely bound up with these conditions are the facts that, for years, Austria has been working untiringly to bring about the augmentation of her influence in Albania and that Greece has been striving to denationalize the people domiciled across her frontier. The first country, actuated by the intense rivalry existing between her and Italy upon all questions connected with the Western Balkans and the Adriatic, has acted as the instrument of Germany, with the object of preparing the way for the realization of the Mittel Europa scheme. The Hellenic Government on the other hand, whilst nominally animated by religious motives, has really directed its policy toward nationalistic objects. The result is, therefore, that the Albanian question, which was nominally settled by the creation of an autonomous principality during the Balkan Wars, still remains one of the most important problems for solution at the end of the present conflagration. It is for

* A chapter from a forthcoming book entitled "The Cradle of the War: the Near East and Pan-Germanism."

this reason, and particularly because the Allies and the United States are pledged to the principle of "government with the consent of the governed" or of "nationality" that we are bound to consider how this principle applies to Albania, whose people are entitled to expect the same consideration as any other small nationality.

GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT

Prior to the Balkan Wars and the loss of territory which was then suffered by Turkey, it was difficult accurately to describe what was meant by the geographical term "Albania." Whilst an official of the Turkish Government always refused to acknowledge the existence of a district known by the name, an Albanian, a Greek, a Bulgarian, or a Serbian would each define the boundaries of Albania in accordance with his own national aspirations. Lord Fitzmaurice (then Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice) in a despatch addressed to Earl Granville in the year 1880 described the district covered by the geographical expression Albania as that territory "which falls mainly within the two vilayets of Skutari and Yanina, but extends also in an easterly direction beyond the watershed of the mountains dividing the streams which fall into the Adriatic from those which fall into the Aegean Sea and includes portions of the vilayets of Monastir and of Kossovo."

The principality of Albania, if principality it can still be called, contains more or less the area which is thus indicated. Situated on the eastern side of the Adriatic and wedged in between Montenegro, Serbia, Greece, and the sea, this unhappy country is the child not of love but of hatred, for its creation was brought about by the rivalry which existed between the Great Powers, and particularly between Austria and Italy, rather than as a result of any feelings of friendship for the Albanians. Whilst the independence of the country was decided upon by the London Ambassadorial Conference in December, 1912, the frontiers have never been definitely fixed, or, more correctly speaking, they have never been observed by the neighboring countries, especially Greece. At the present time, therefore, it is impossible to say whether, in discussing Albania, we should include or exclude the large southern areas which are in dispute with Greece and parts of which have been in Italian hands since an earlier period of the war. If we include these in Albania and consider that country as it was established by the Great Powers, then it has an area of about 11,000 square miles and a population of approximately 800,000 souls. Measured from north to south it has a length of about 180 miles, and from west to east an approximate width, at its broadest part, of only 85 miles.

CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY

The greater part of the country is mountainous. In the neighborhood of Skutari, in areas of central Albania, and in the south, there are, however,

fertile plains watered by various rivers which flow into the Adriatic. The people devote themselves almost entirely to agriculture, which is carried on with primitive implements, such as wooden plows. There are no home manufactures. Goat and sheep skins, which are exported, are dried by pegging them down upon the ground with wooden pegs. One of the most important exports from the country is the bitumen found at Selenitza near Valona. The mine is worked by a French syndicate, and the bitumen, which is of high quality, is transported to the port on pack animals across the hills for a distance of some twelve miles. Towns properly so called are few. Skutari, having a population of about 32,000 souls and constituting the capital of the north, is the only city which boasts

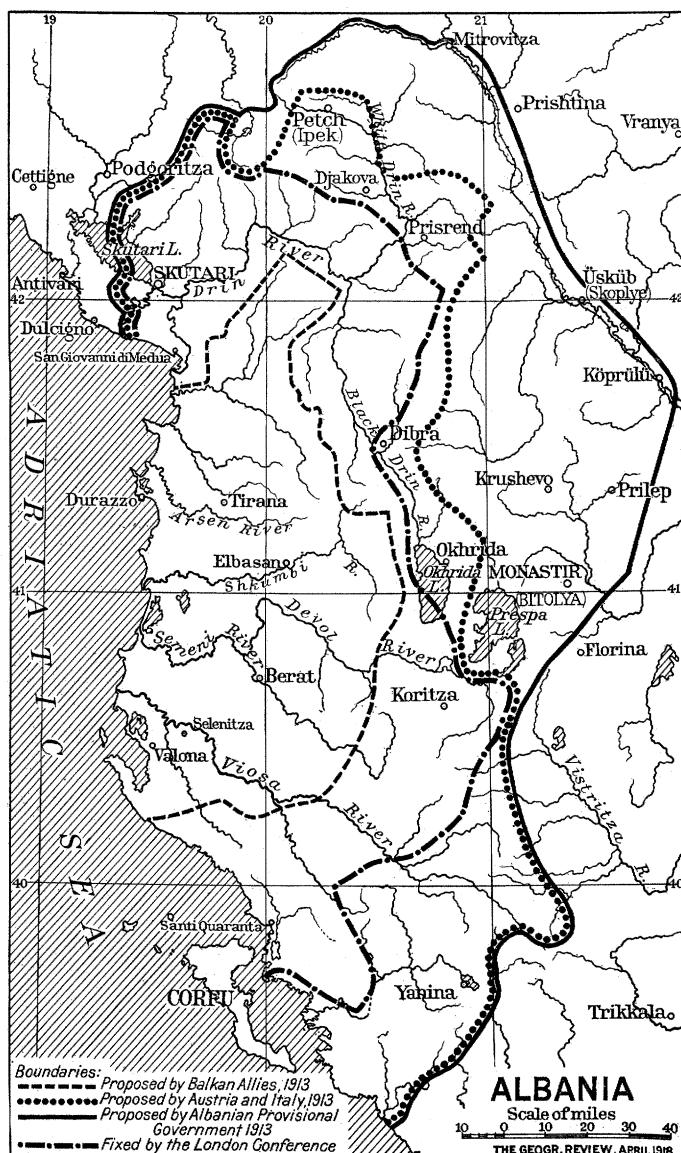


FIG. 1.—Sketch map of Albania showing the various proposed boundaries and the boundary fixed by the London Conference of 1913. Scale, 1:2,900,000.

The boundaries are based on a map, 1:3,400,000, accompanying C. A. Dako: *The Independence of Albania A Necessity for International Peace*, *Ylli i Mengjitez* (*The Morning Star*, Vol. 1, No. 6, April 2, 1917, pp. 161-168 [an Albanian fortnightly published at Boston, Mass.]). For a somewhat different interpretation of the proposed boundaries, see the map (Pl. 33), 1:1,500,000, accompanying Antonio Baldacci: *Der neue albanische Staat und seine Grenzen*, *Petermanns Mitt.*, Vol. 59, 1913, Part I, pp. 221-222.

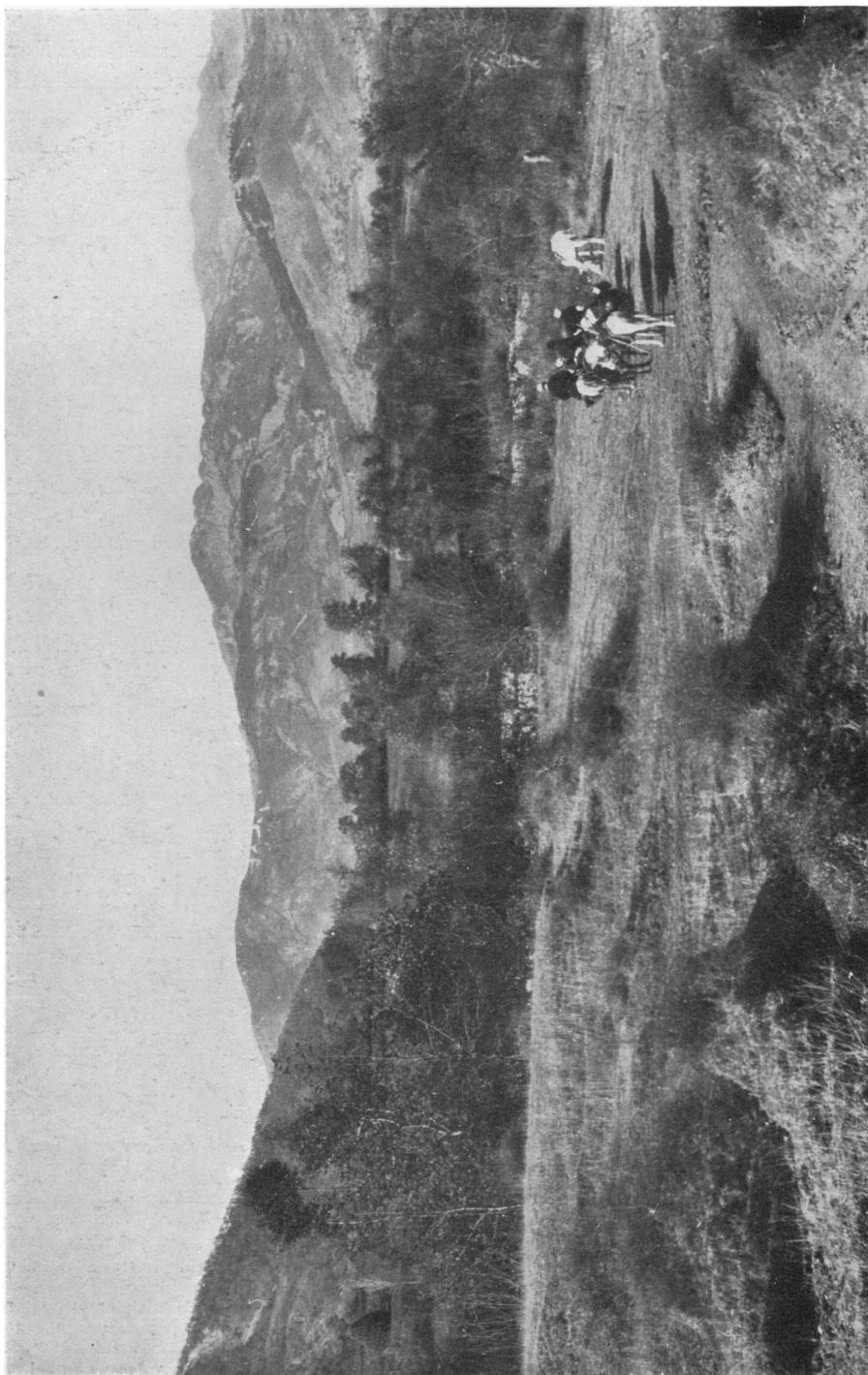


FIG. 2—Valley of the Shkumbi River near Broshka, about ten miles below Elbasan. (Figs. 2-9 from copyrighted photographs by the author.)

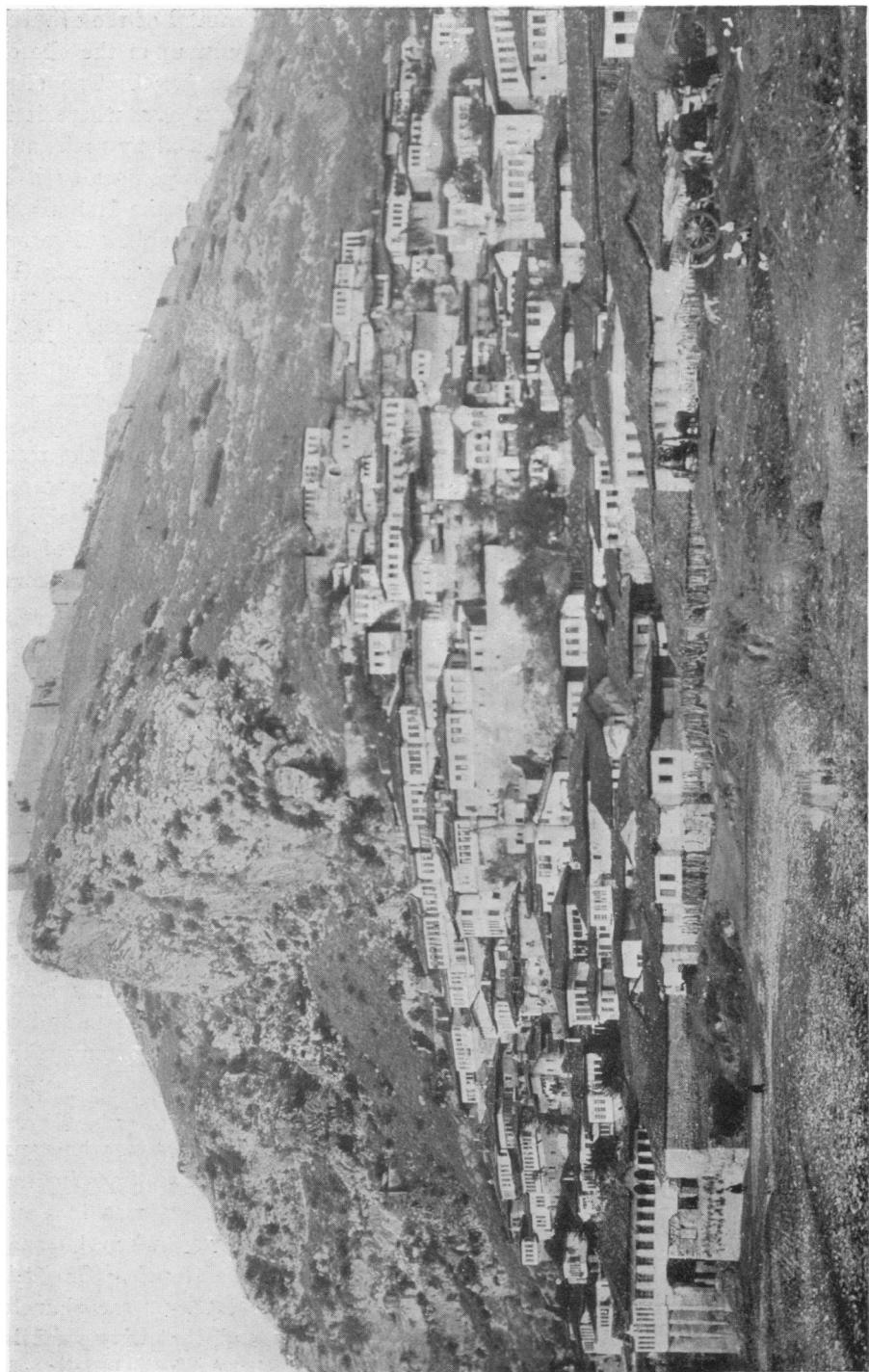


FIG. 8—Part of the town of Berat, showing the citadel.

more than 15,000 inhabitants. Durazzo, the so-called capital of the country and the former seat of the Prince's government, is built upon the site of the ancient Dyrrachion. It has a population of only 5,000. The city, which is located on the northern shore of a commodious bay, where it is almost always safe for ships to lie, is practically surrounded by rocks and by the sea, except upon the side where the promontory upon which it is built is joined to the mainland. Valona, now occupied by the Italians, is possessed of a fine bay. Its population is about 6,000 souls. Elbasan, situated in the heart of the country and in the Shkumbi valley, is the proper capital of the country, not only on account of its central position, but also because its inhabitants possess the most moderate political ideas and therefore voice what should be the general policy of a united Albania.

NATIONALITY

From a local as well as from a national point of view, one of the most important questions connected with Albania today is that which concerns the nationality of its inhabitants. In Turkish times these people, unlike the other alien races which went to make up the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire, were not formed into a "millet" or religious "community." In other words, whilst the nationality of the Bulgarians and the Greeks was recognized as the result of the existence of the Bulgarian and the Greek Churches, the Albanians, having no such bond, were classed in the census entirely according to their religion. Thus, if an Albanian belonged to the Orthodox Church he was called a Greek, if he was a Moslem he was put down as a Turk. This meant not only that the gallant Shky-petars, as the Albanians call themselves, were never supported by intrigues adroitly hatched in various capitals but also that their territory was a prey to the aspirations of their neighbors. This is a question of supreme importance, for whilst up to a point Abdul Hamid encouraged the Greeks, the Bulgarians, and the Serbians of Turkey in their nationalistic and religious ideas, with the express purpose of causing strife between these elements of the population, the Turks—old and new—never left a stone unturned to subdue the Albanians, whose sentiments of nationalism and of patriotism are probably older, stronger, and deeper than those of any other Balkan people.

The Albanians are generally and probably accurately identified by impartial authorities as the descendants of the ancient Illyrians, who were simply the inhabitants of Illyria and who in their turn were the offspring of the Pelasgians—the first people to come to Europe. It was to their forefathers, the Albanians allege, that St. Paul referred when he said "Round about unto Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." But little is known about these Illyrians except that they were slow to accept the civilization of the Greeks and Romans and that subsequently they were driven westward towards the shores of the Adriatic by the ad-

vancing hordes of Slavs. From the time of the Turkish conquest, which may be said to have been completed about the year 1478, and soon after the death of the famous Albanian hero Skanderbeg, until the Balkan Wars Albania formed part of the Ottoman Empire and was nominally ruled from Constantinople. But such were the strength and the feelings of nationalism of the people that throughout this period they really enjoyed a considerable amount of independence, being governed largely by unwritten laws administered by the local chieftains. In short, for centuries the Albanians occupied in Europe towards the government a similar position to that held in Asia Minor by the Kurds. Both races are religiously unorthodox, both races have been utilized by the Turks to support them in times of need, and prior to the re-establishment of the Ottoman constitution in 1908, the attitudes of both races towards European interference in the Turkish Empire were made use of by the central government as a threat to the Great Powers as each new program for reform was suggested at Constantinople.

CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE

The Albanians today are a warlike, lawless people, but nevertheless they have their own—and a very strict—code of honor and they are faithful even unto death. An Arnaut once engaged is not only a most trusty servant and loyal follower in the Near East, but he is the most useful protector of his employer in whatever difficulty may arise. Indeed, the honor of the people is such that if once they have entertained you in their houses, or if once they have given you a promise, you may be absolutely sure that nothing will be too great a sacrifice for them to make in order that that promise may be fulfilled. I well remember that on one occasion when I was traveling in Albania it was necessary to accomplish an extremely long journey in the course of one day. My guides and horsemen protested against my wish to do what they said was almost impossible. They finally agreed, however, and we started out on the morrow. These men walked hour after hour over the roughest of country, and we eventually accomplished my object, only because they went far beyond their bargain, even carrying me across rivers in the dark and protecting me against wild dogs in order that we might reach the house of friends before night. Compensation of course they got, but even compensation will not always ensure the honorable fulfillment of an agreement.

The Albanians are divided into two main groups, the Ghegs and the Tosks. The Shkumbi River, which enters the Adriatic halfway between the towns of Durazzo and Valona, and its picturesque valley, may be said to separate the country of the former from that of the latter. The Ghegs, or Northern Albanians, are, in their turn, made up of a number of warlike tribes, many of whom still live a feudal life. The Tosks, or Southern Albanians, are more civilized and perhaps less warlike than their northern

brothers. Their tribal system is much less well defined, but they owe their allegiance to local beys or chiefs, to whom they turn for guidance in all matters of importance.

RELIGION

Whilst foreign propaganda has done a good deal to excite the religious feelings of the people, the Albanians are not as a rule religious fanatics. At the present time about two-thirds of the Albanian population is Moslem. Of the remaining one-third the Christians of the north are Roman Catholics, whilst those of the south belong to the Greek Orthodox Church. This religious division is due to several historical facts. Originally the people were all Christians, many of them having been converted as early as the first century. In earlier times the Albanians belonged to the Orthodox faith, but about the middle of the thirteenth century many of the Catholic Ghegs of the north abandoned the Eastern for the Western Church, and at the time of Skanderbeg there was a further secession. After the arrival of the Turks, when the people were Christian in little but name, large numbers embraced Islam, from secular rather than from spiritual reasons, that is to say, because the position of a Moslem was in many ways a more privileged one than that of a Christian. There was a further secession in the seventeenth century for like causes. But whilst there is often strife between the different religious elements, owing generally to misunderstandings, the people are in principle and at bottom Albanians before they are either Moslems or Christians. Consequently whatever disputes take place are rather results of political or local squabbles than of innate religious differences. There are districts where the inhabitants are entirely Christian and others where they are exclusively Moslem. But the greater part of the country is more or less mixed. In the south there is less religious strife than in the north. This is particularly true of recent years, for as the nationalistic movement has increased the Orthodox Albanians have grown to understand that their religion has been exploited by the Greek Church for political purposes. The power of that Church, therefore, is greatly decreasing, and the people are slowly coming to understand that they need not fear the attitude of their Moslem fellow countrymen.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The Albanians have their own language. It is held by most authorities to be of Aryan origin and probably formed the original speech of the people of large parts, if not the whole, of the Balkan Peninsula. Although the groundwork and grammar of the language are supposed to be Indo-European, a large number of words have been taken from the Turkish, Latin, Greek, Slav, and Italian tongues, which means that there are distinct dialects in different parts of the country. The people of the various regions have borrowed words from the language of the people nearest



FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.

FIG. 4—Durazzo, taken from back of the town.

FIG. 5—The author's caravan in central Albania, between Tirana and Kroya.

FIG. 6—The author's carriage in central Albania.

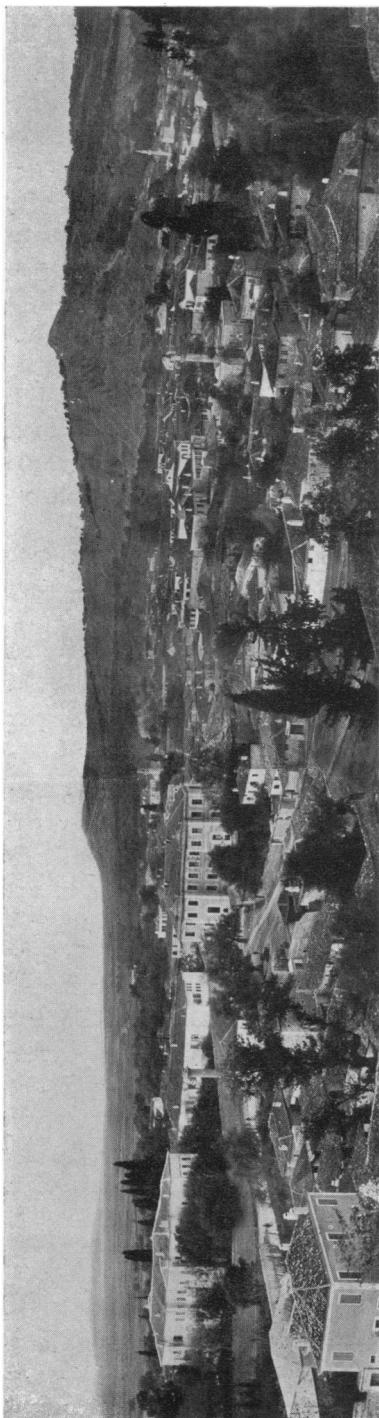


FIG. 7.—Panorama of the port of Valona on the southern Albanian coast. The town itself lies about a mile and a half from the sea, where the hills of the interior meet the marshy coastal plain.

them. Thus the ignorant Tosk of the south makes use of many more Greek words than a Gheg of the north, whom he would only understand with a certain difficulty. The fact, too, that Albanian was only reduced to writing in comparatively modern times, and that no general form of alphabet was decided upon until after the advent of the Turkish constitution, is largely responsible for the differences of the dialect which exist today.

There is nothing to indicate that prior to the seventeenth century the Albanians could read or write their own language, and the large majority of the people cannot read or write today. The earliest books in Albanian were published about three hundred years ago. These volumes consisted of religious works, dictionaries, and textbooks. Much later the Roman Catholic clergy furthered the language movement by providing the people with books, many of which were published in Skutari by the Jesuits, who began their work in Albania about the middle of the nineteenth century. But it is largely owing to the religious work undertaken by the British and Foreign Bible Society that the people have been provided with literature in Albanian. As early as 1824 the Gospel of St. Matthew was printed in Tosk Albanian at Corfu by the Ionian Bible Society—a society promoted and subsidized by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Three years later the whole of the New Testament was published under the same auspices in the same language. In this publication the modified Greek alphabet, used in the printing, was included in order to enable the illiterate people to read

its contents. Between the years 1860 and 1870 a large portion of the Bible was translated by an Albanian, and a volume containing the four Gospels, the Book of Acts, and an alphabet, in Latin characters with certain minor alterations, was published for the Ghegs in 1866. This publication was followed by others printed in the Greek characters for the people of the south and in the Latin for those of the north and published in Constantinople between the years 1868 and 1879. Ten years later under the direction of Gerasim Kyrias, a patriotic Albanian who had studied in the American School at Samakov, the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of St. Matthew were printed in the new national alphabet (i. e. the Latin alphabet with modifications) adopted by an Albanian committee which met in 1879 to discuss the development of literature. So strong, however, was the Turkish opposition to the introduction of these characters that various publications subsequently made were not allowed to be printed in them. It was only, therefore, after the re-establishment of the constitution in 1908 that the question of the method of writing the language was again taken up seriously and that the new national characters were finally adopted. Their employment was as fervently opposed by the Young Turks as it had been by their predecessors.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Prior to the advent to power of the Young Turks every endeavor was made to hinder the nationalistic movement. At the same time, during the reign of Abdul Hamid the Albanians were treated with the utmost deference, and His Majesty did everything in his power to make certain of their support in time of need. The Albanian Imperial Guard, recruited from the south, was always well and regularly paid, and these soldiers were allowed to return to their villages as soon as their time had expired, instead of being retained with the colors for months or years beyond their proper period of service. During the days of the old régime, too, the Albanians, especially the tribes of the north, were permitted to manage their own internal affairs, practically without the interference of the Constantinople Government. It was only when the northeastern Ghegs—always actuated by feelings of antagonism towards their Slav brothers—seemed inclined to jeopardize the policy of their spiritual and temporal master at Constantinople, that troops were dispatched to Albania to quiet the country, either by bombarding the malefactors with shell or by bribing their leaders with decorations or with money.

After the re-establishment of the Ottoman constitution, the Young Turks, instead of recognizing that the Albanians could be of valuable support to them, immediately antagonized them by endeavoring to abrogate many of the privileges which they had previously enjoyed. In the north these endeavors took the form of striving to disarm the people, of attempting to do away with the tribal system of government by which the people had formerly been ruled, and of trying to introduce compulsory military ser-

vice. Throughout the country, too, and particularly in the south, another grievance common to the Moslem and Christian Albanians was the attitude of the Sublime Porte towards education. Not only did the Government fail to establish Albanian schools, but it actually opposed the opening and even insisted upon the closing of several schools established by the Albanians themselves. The result of this policy was that from the summer of 1909 right up to the time of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, large areas of the country were in an almost continuous state of insurrection—a condition which was indirectly if not directly responsible for hastening the downfall of Turkey as a European Power.

AN AUTONOMOUS STATE

The Albanians took no active part in the Balkan Wars, because they hated both the Balkan Allies and the Turks with an equal hatred. On the one hand they knew that the Serbians, Montenegrins, Greeks, and to a lesser degree the Bulgarians all coveted areas of territory which were dear to them. On the other hand they recognized that an Ottoman victory would result in further attempts to denationalize and to subjugate them. The consequence was, that as the Turkish rule over Albania existed only in name, practically the whole country was overrun by Serbians, Montenegrins, and Greeks, many of the farms and houses being burned and large portions of the population put to flight. The Balkan Wars were, however, an epoch-making period for the people because during the first campaign and at the end of November, 1912, Ismail Kemal Bey—a former member of the Ottoman Chamber and a leading Albanian—proclaimed an independent government at Valona and, some three weeks later, the London Ambassadorial Conference decided to establish an autonomous Albanian state. That decision, which was followed by prolonged negotiations between the Great Powers as to the status and the frontiers of the new principality, was finally carried out in a manner which made the adopted boundaries of the country a sort of compromise between those suggested by the Balkan Allies, who worked for a very small Albania, and those advocated by Austria and Italy, who, whilst claiming less than did the Albanian Provisional Government, none the less proposed a settlement too much in accordance with the basis of nationality to be acceptable to Serbia, to Montenegro, or to Greece (see map, Fig. 1). In short, whilst the Albanians finally got Skutari in the north and Koritza and Santi Quaranta in the south, they did not secure Ipek, Djakova, Prizrend, and Dibra—places which by their allotment to Montenegro and to Serbia robbed the people of northern Albania of market towns where they had always been wont to trade.

In addition to the fact that it did something to make known to Europe the claims of the Albanians, the Provisional Government of Ismail Kemal Bey, which in a way was the father of the state, together with others afterwards set up in districts not occupied by the Balkan armies or from which



FIG. 8.



FIG. 9.

FIG. 8—Santi Quaranta, a port on the southern Albanian coast opposite the northern end of Corfu.

FIG. 9—Skutari: the Turkish part of the town seen from the Tarabosh road. The Boyana River in the foreground.

they had withdrawn, maintained order and did wonders to preserve peace from the moment of their establishment until long after the arrival of the European Commission of Control (the appointment of which was decided upon by the Ambassadorial Conference) in the early autumn of 1913. Indeed when I was in Albania immediately after this, although I found the international forces in possession of Skutari and three or four entirely independent governments in different parts of the country, such was the state of things that I traveled with perfect safety through the greater part of it without any guard other than a native policeman to enable me to find my way about.

WILLIAM OF WIED

Prince William of Wied, a major in the German Guards, who was nominated by the Great Powers in November, 1913, to rule Albania, arrived at Durazzo, which he constituted his capital, on March 7, 1914. The fact that his régime was a total failure is due in part to the international conditions then prevailing and in part to the rôle he personally played. On the international side trouble arose from the fact that Albania had been constituted largely in order to relieve European tension and some of the ever-recurring difficulties between the Great Powers. Moreover, whilst Europe had nominally fixed the northern and southern frontiers, she took no effective measures to hand over to the prince territory which was his. In the south, the Greeks remained in possession of large areas of Albania until the end of March, 1914. Most, if not all, of these districts were then officially evacuated. But, instead of the Greek regular army, there came the Epirote insurgents and the Epirote independent government, who, secretly supported from Athens, maintained a reign of terror in an area actually allotted to Albania. Thus throughout the stay of the "Mpret," as the Albanians called their ruler, the European concert, if concert it can be called, ignored the necessity for taking the measures essential for the protection of the country and looked on passively whilst the Greeks infringed the frontiers already delimited in the south and whilst the insurgents threatened and practically besieged Durazzo in a manner which finally confined the powers of the prince almost to the very precincts of his palace.

Thus enormous difficulties must have beset any ruler of Albania. His Royal Highness, whose shortcomings were apparent from the first, made little endeavor to overcome them. To say nothing of his attitude towards the southern frontier question, concerning which he should have made some stipulation with the Great Powers before he ever entered upon his new task, the prince made at least two fundamental mistakes. By arriving at Durazzo, instead of entering his new country by way of Skutari, which was still in the hands of the international forces which occupied it in the first Balkan War, and which was therefore more or less neutral country, the new ruler seemed to show his partiality towards Essad Pasha and thus offended

all the enemies of a man, who, if then powerful in the center of the country, was certainly not beloved beyond the confines of his own particular district. Subsequently, instead of trying to take the people into his confidence before it was too late, and of endeavoring to travel among them, the prince appeared to think that he could maintain his authority by encouraging one section of the community to support him against the other and that he could succeed in Albania without any display of courage. Thus on May 24, a few days after the banishment of Essad Pasha, at a time when Durazzo was threatened by the insurgents, the prince and his family took refuge on an Italian warship—an act which was enough to seal his fate in a country where cowardice is not one of the faults of the people. As time wore on things went from bad to worse until the outbreak of the war, immediately before which the international contingent vacated Skutari and immediately after which the prince and the International Commission of Control left Durazzo.

PRESENT CONDITIONS

Before the prince departed on September 11, Turkish insurgents, having occupied Valona, advanced upon Durazzo. From that time onwards, therefore, the country, once more left without even the vestige of a central government, was ruled by various self-constituted administrations, all practically inter-independent. At first Prince Burhan Eddin, son of the ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid, was the nominal chief of an administration which owed any force it possessed to the local power of Essad Pasha. After the subjugation of Serbia and Montenegro, in the winter of 1914-15, when a large number of Serbians retreated to the Adriatic coast through Albania, the northern and central districts of the country were overrun by the Austro-Germans, who finally occupied and still hold about three-quarters of the principality. Aside from the fact that a proclamation was issued by the enemy in 1917, to the effect that he proposes to create of Albania some kind of autonomous province, closely allied to if not constituting an integral part of Austria-Hungary, we therefore have no reliable information concerning the conditions prevailing in an area which is entirely cut off from communication with the Allied world.

SOUTHERN ALBANIA

In the south, where the Italians occupied Valona on December 25, 1914, before the entry of that country into the war, events have been bound up with the attitude of the Hellenic Government towards the Epirus question, with the relations existing between Greece and Italy upon that subject, and with the developments in the zone actually held by the forces of King Victor Emanuel. With regard to the first two questions sufficient be it to say that in December, 1916, shortly after the capture of Monastir by the Allies, Colonel Descoin, acting on behalf of the French Government, proclaimed the establishment of a small autonomous Albanian state, to include Koritza

and the area immediately surrounding that town. Farther to the south, where the Greeks had evacuated areas previously held by them, the Italians took over a large section of Epirus and occupied Yanina, actually in Greek territory, during the spring of 1917. After the abdication of King Constantine in June, 1917, and the return to office of M. Venizelos it was, however, arranged at the Paris Conference of the following month that the Italians should withdraw from all but the triangular area of Greek territory through which the road from Santi Quaranta to Koritza runs. This arrangement, together with the fact that M. Venizelos has always endeavored to adopt a moderate attitude upon the Southern Albanian frontier question, have, it must be hoped, created a new atmosphere—an atmosphere in which this highly complicated problem may be able to be solved at the same time in accordance with the principle of nationalities and without serious detriment to the interests of the two countries most closely affected by this ever-vexed question.

ITALIAN OCCUPATION

Whilst prior to her adhesion to the side of the Allies, Italy contented herself by the occupation of the port of Valona, later she extended her front so that it ran along the lower reaches of the Viosa River, which constitutes the natural defensive line for that city. Subsequently, too, she disembarked another force at Santi Quaranta, which, acting with the army already at Valona, advanced into the interior and ultimately established connection near the village of Cologna with the Allied forces based upon Saloniki. Since that time Italy has been in occupation of approximately a quarter of the whole country—a quarter in which she has done a great deal to improve conditions previously prevailing. Considerable lengths of road have been built by the Italians—lengths which have not only facilitated communication but also have provided the native population with work at a fair rate of pay. Agricultural colleges have been established, and the farmers, now able to obtain machinery, are being encouraged to cultivate their ground systematically. Numerous schools have been opened, and the children are thus educated in a manner which has never previously been possible. Last but not least the Italians, realizing that the way to win the people is to leave the direction of local affairs as far as possible in their own hands, have established courts of justice, some of which are presided over by natives brought over from the large Albanian colony in Italy, and have formed a local police corps under the supervision of Italian officers.

THE FUTURE

With regard to the future there are two questions of outstanding importance. The first is the problem bound up with the frontiers of the country—a problem complicated in the extreme. It would seem that the Albanians and their friends would do well to work not for the establish-

ment of new but for the rectification of present frontiers. If that policy be adopted, the principal directions in which attention should be turned are towards a change in the south which would bring the whole of the road from Santi Quaranta to Koritza within Albania, instead of leaving it to pass through a triangular area of Greece, as it did prior to the war; towards the inclusion in Albania of Dibra, Prizrend, and Djakova—towns which are absolutely essential as market centers, and towards the regaining of the tribes of Hoti and Gruda, which are so absolutely Albanian in sentiment that they will never peacefully accept any form of alien rule. With such modifications of the decisions arrived at by the London Ambassadorial Conference, Albania would not possess all that she desires but she would at least be constituted on a basis that would make her national existence practicable instead of impossible, as it was during the régime which immediately preceded the war.

Turning to the future status of the principality, on account of the aspirations of her neighbors, of the lack of development of the country, and of the inexperience of the vast majority of the people in all matters pertaining to government, I do not think that, for the present at least, Albania can exist or manage her affairs entirely alone. Consequently, as a return to the state of things existing after the Balkan Wars is impossible, only two alternatives appear to be left. The first is some form of autonomy under all or perhaps a group of the Allied Great Powers—an arrangement carrying with it the difficulties always arising from combined control. The second is her protection by some one of the countries now fighting for the interests of smaller nationalities. If this latter alternative be adopted, as neither the United States nor Great Britain would be likely to wish to undertake the task, it would naturally fall to Italy, who has already proclaimed "the unity and independence of all Albania under the aegis and protection of the Kingdom of Italy" and who has, as I have said, shown her good will towards the Albanians. Such a solution might not at once be acceptable to those of the inhabitants who actually desire to be entirely independent. But patriots as they are, these men will do well to remember that in addition to helping them establish good government and develop their country, the protection of Italy will provide them with a powerful friend—a friend without whom they might be helpless not only to enlarge, but even to maintain, their present frontiers.